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# Arizona Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Tribal Training Workshop

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Report Provided By:

Governor Brewer's Office for Children, Youth and Families  
Division for Substance Abuse Policy

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## Workshop Summary

The first Arizona Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Tribal Training Workshop was held on January 28-29, 2009 at the Radisson Fort McDowell Resort and Casino. The Workshop, a collaborative effort by the Governor's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) brought together tribal representatives from tribal communities in Arizona. Participants heard presentations from and participated in discussions and table top exercises with a multidisciplinary group of national, state and tribal representatives involved with DEC to gain the tools needed to create protocols to ensure the safety and protection of children.

## Attendance

Registration for the Workshop was met with an overwhelming response, and there were several people placed on a waiting list to attend as the event had reached capacity. There were 155 participants in attendance representing the multiple disciplines that encounter DEC: social services and child protective services, medical and behavioral health services, law enforcement, prosecution, education, administration, and tribal anti-methamphetamine coalitions. The participants represented 14 tribal communities: Ak-Chin, Cocopah, Colorado River Indian Tribe, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Gila River, Hopi, Hualapai, Kaibab Paiute, Navajo, Pascua Yaqui, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, San Carlos Apache, Tohono O'odham and Yavapai-Apache.

## Event Overview

Workshop participants were afforded the opportunity to hear from 19 presenters, representing local, state, federal and tribal entities. Welcoming remarks were provided by several high-level guests on both days and set the tone for a productive and essential Workshop experience. Seven different topics were presented, including the multidisciplinary approaches to DEC. These presentations were

capped off with a panel discussion and question and answer session to engage participants and provide them with the answers and resources they needed. Ron Mullins, a national authority on DEC and Senior Instructor, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center provided a keynote presentation titled "*What is a Drug Endangered Child*". Representatives from the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, Cindy Giese and Richard Van Boxtel, presented on their experience in developing tribal DEC initiatives in Wisconsin.

In addition to presentations, Workshop participants engaged in a hands-on collaborative table-top exercise on the second day of the Workshop. This exercise required participants to come together in their tribal groups to work through several DEC scenarios. These scenarios required participants to think through how they would come together as a multi-disciplinary DEC team in their community to address the problem and needs described. As a component of this exercise, tribes identified the resources they have that can contribute to DEC, and where they are lacking and would benefit from additional resources or training.

## Outcomes

All Workshop participants were provided with a CD containing several of the presentations as well as guidance including the DEC Protocol Defined, DEC Protocol Checklist, and Steps to Creating a Tribal Community DEC Program. This CD also provided examples and blank versions of DEC Protocols and Memoranda of Understanding so that tribal communities could use them in their communities to develop their own.

Following the Workshop, all presentations were provided to participants as well as those that were unable to attend via the following website:

[www.drop.io/azdecprpnt](http://www.drop.io/azdecprpnt)

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## Evaluations and Feedback from Workshop Participants

During the table-top exercises participants completed a Tribal DEC Questionnaire which contained questions related to the resources and parties currently involved in their DEC investigations, as well as feedback on the type of follow-up assistance they would benefit from and the usefulness of the Workshop. Responses to these questions can be provided separately, but the following are some of the highlights.

- In the Navajo Nation, the Drug and Gang Unit works with social services in responding to DEC.
- The amount and type of resources available in the community to respond to DEC investigations varies greatly between tribes, as some have procedures (informal) in place that include coordination between agencies. Many tribes demonstrate cooperation between law enforcement and social services.
- When asked which drugs the DEC definition should focus on or include when considering the resources available, tribes identified the following (out of 14 tribes responding):
  - Meth- 11 tribes
  - Alcohol- 7 tribes
  - Marijuana- 6 tribes
  - Cocaine- 5 tribes
  - Prescription Drugs- 3 tribes
  - Inhalants- 2 tribes
  - Heroin- 2 tribe
  - Barbiturates- 1 tribe

- All drugs (not limiting to specific drugs)- 1 tribe
- Several tribes identified that they have no organized procedures in the community to identify and determine the existence of DEC issues. Cocopah representatives reported that the community “denies” the existence of DEC issues.
- Prior to the Workshop, one tribe held an initial meeting and initial planning was underway to establish DEC protocols which are not currently in place.
- Tribal code definitions for drugs and child abuse varied, and three tribes did not identify a tribal code for either.

## Workshop Evaluation and Requests for Assistance

What did you find most beneficial in this workshop?  
Why?

- Awareness of drug exposure to children and importance of the issue
- Six tribes identified resources and information including points of contact as being the most beneficial part of the Workshop.
- Examples of collaboration and models for changes in tribal law
- Networking and contact with multiple disciplines and jurisdictions

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- Two tribes found it beneficial to learn the difference between tribal and state levels and procedures for removing children from DEC situations, as well as what teams and tools are available to assist in this process.
  - One tribe reported that they learned how important it is to form partnerships to protect DEC.

What resources and/or technical assistance will be beneficial for your community, in order to develop DEC protocols and advance DEC in your community?

- One tribe identified that it would be beneficial for the police department, prosecutors and social services to be educated on DEC together so that they can work as a team to protect the children in their community.
- One tribe felt that communication with tribal council would be beneficial in developing DEC protocols and advancing DEC in their community.
- One tribe reported that the development of a database to track sex offenders moving among reservations would be beneficial, as well as a protocol for DEC removed from homes (including medical evaluation and decontamination).
- One tribe felt that additional local workshops would be beneficial.
- One tribe felt it would be helpful to have additional information regarding funding, training and networking with other tribal, state and federal agencies.
- One tribe felt that additional funding, training, equipment and human resources would serve to make the tribe self-sufficient in addressing DEC.

Do you have recommendations for future workshops?

Four tribes responded that in the future the Workshop should be longer, as it covered much information in a short period of time and it would have been beneficial to give presenters more time for their curriculum. It was also mentioned that additional sources for referral would have been helpful. One tribe recommended incorporating new and innovative prevention messages.

## Next Steps

Seven tribes immediately identified their need for additional training and assistance in developing DEC protocols.

The partners involved in the Arizona DEC Tribal Training Workshop will work together to provide the technical assistance and training requested by tribal communities. In addition, the Governor's Office will continue to provide any relevant DEC resources and documents to the participants through email and the website.